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*Association : The Dominating Need of Man and the Keynote of Social Science.*

*By Henry Carey Baird.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, March 16, 1894.)*

Never before to-day, in the history of the human race, has there been so earnest or so widely extended an examination of economic problems. At this very hour the philosophers of the orthodox political economy and their philosophy are on trial before Christendom ; and the issue is not : Is the philosophy true or is it false ? But rather : Is it or is it not so false and pernicious that when applied to human society that society is wholly unable to stand the strain, and is constantly, as a result, in danger of wreck ?

Social Science is fast emerging from that place wherein it has long been the plaything of school-men, who acknowledge themselves as being the teachers of "a science based on assumptions." Soon these teachers will be classed as mere metaphysicians, whose disquisitions can lead to no beneficent practical end, and their learned treatises will finally be consigned to that great lumber-room of the centuries which holds the larger part of the literature of the world, the forgotten, because useless books. Empires, kingdoms, republics, even society itself trembles in the balance, and these philosophers of "assumptions" have held the leading role in the terrible drama which places all of these human institutions in peril.

Therefore, does it seem fitting that so venerable and so renowned an institution as the American Philosophical Society should give some heed to the consideration of these vital problems. Hence do I ask your attention to

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OF SOCIAL SCIENCE.

In science the most important preliminary work is that of definitions, in order that the exact meanings of words may be distinctly understood, and when so understood, that those words shall always be used with the same significance. Social Science treats of man in his efforts for the maintenance and improvement of his condition, and as defined by the Master, Carey, is "The science of the laws which govern man in his efforts to secure for himself the highest individuality and the greatest power of association with his fellow-men." This definition is not only broad and comprehensive, but it points unmistakably to the true direction in which we must look for the investigation and solution of each and every principle in social science. It uncovers and lays bare the very tap-root of the science itself.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

From this definition it is but one step to the fundamental principle and this principle as enunciated, also by the Master, is as follows :

"Man, the molecule of society, is the subject of social science. In common with all other animals he requires to eat, drink and sleep, but his greatest need is that of *association* with his fellow-men. Born the weakest and most dependent of animals, he requires the largest care in infancy, and must be clothed by others, whereas to birds and beasts clothing is supplied by nature. Capable of acquiring the highest degree of knowledge, he appears in the world destitute even of that instinct which teaches the bee and the spider, the bird and the beaver, to construct their habitations, and to supply themselves with food. Dependent upon the experience of himself and others for all his knowledge, he requires language to enable him either to record the results of his own observations, or to profit by those of others ; and of language there can be none without association. Created in the image of his Maker, he should participate in His intelligence ; but it is only by means of ideas that he can avail himself of the faculties with which he has been endowed, and without language there can be no ideas—no power of thought. Without language, therefore, he must remain in ignorance of the existence of powers granted to him in lieu of the strength of the ox and the horse, the speed of the hare, and the sagacity of the elephant, and must remain below the level of the brute creation. To have language there must be association and combination of men with their fellow-men, and it is on this condition only that man can be man ; on this alone that we can conceive of the being to which we attach the idea of man."\*

## ALL SOCIAL SCIENCE MUST START FROM THE LAW OF ASSOCIATION.

All true social science must of necessity start from this point. It can start from none other ; and any system which attempts to ignore this fundamental principle, as such, is false in its inception, and must of necessity be false throughout. There is no escape from this dilemma. The all-controlling condition which governs man in this world is that which obliges him to associate and combine with his fellow-men. Literally from the cradle to the grave, it controls his destiny and is at the bottom of all of the motives which, throughout his career, impel him to action. He is thus insufficient unto himself, and the higher his civilization the greater become his wants, and, therefore, the greater his dependence on his fellow-men and the more rigid and unyielding over his daily, his hourly life, the domination of the law. All social science is concerned about it ; and without it there would be no social science, no political economy, no wealth, no poverty, no money, no banks, no interest, no credit, no landlords, no tenants, no states, no cities, no towns, no villages, no governments, no taxes, no emperors, kings or presidents, no armies, no navies, no generals, no admirals, no steamships, no railroads, no

\* Carey, *Principles of Social Science*, Vol. i, p. 41.

mails, no post-office, no corporations, no shops, no trade, no commerce, no colleges, no schools, no poets, no historians, no history, no literature, no science, no philosophy, no language, no professors, no doctors, no lawyers, no laws, no society; but each and every man and woman would be a law and a power unto himself or herself; and so would every child, from the moment of its birth to the hour of its death. Indeed, the entire life of each and every human being would be different from what it now is, and no one would have any occupation whatever, except that of looking after his or her necessities. Thus, would each and every one of these human vegetables live, grow, and flourish like any other vegetable independent of his fellow-vegetables. In fact, the human animal of many of the economic philosophers partakes more of the nature of the vegetable than of that of the human being known as *man*, because this philosopher has ignored and dropped out of his system the very quality which most characterizes and controls man and which most separates him from the lower forms of life, both animal and vegetable.

#### WEALTH AND POVERTY, WHAT ARE THEY?

What then is it that men struggle for, and worry about, live, wear out, and die to obtain, and retain under the name of individual wealth? It is simply the power to associate with, to command the services, the commodities and the ideas of the largest body of men. What then is individual poverty? The absence of the power readily to command these services, commodities and ideas. Thus, whether he be prince, millionaire, or pauper, man perishes of cold, of heat, of hunger, of thirst, of want, unless he can bring himself into association with his fellow-men. To sum up, the life of man is but a series, a net-work, a complication of acts of association, to cease the performance of which acts is, of necessity, to cease to live.

#### DIVERSITY.

The question now arises, How is this power of association to be developed? Primarily, by means of a diversity in the capabilities, employments, productions, and wants among the people constituting society; to the end that there shall there exist the greatest number and the most powerful societary positives and negatives attainable or conceivable. To accomplish this the consumer must be brought to the side of the producer, the plough, the loom, and the anvil, the farm, the factory, and the workshop existing and growing up alongside of and in harmonious relations each to the others, giving and receiving, blessing and being blessed. Thus, and thus only, can labor power, the most perishable of all commodities, be utilized on the instant of its production, and crystallized into work, the basis of all wealth, individual and national. No foreign commodity is therefore cheap or desirable to a people, no matter how low its price, while the labor at home is going to waste which might be employed in its production. Hence the necessity for every people to

build up thoroughly diversified industries at any cost and any sacrifice of present apparent cheapness. On this impregnable rock does the protectionist plant himself and defy the enemy, be he philosopher or be he boor.

#### MONEY THE INSTRUMENT OF ASSOCIATION.

By means of the brilliant, all-pervading sunlight, which the recognition of the true place held by the law of association at the very foundation of society sheds upon the societary problem, the function of money assumes a new position, and the accumulated rubbish of centuries which has covered up and obscured it is completely brushed aside. In no other direction than that of the appreciation of the life-giving function of money, that of ministering to man's need for association and combination with his fellow-men, can we so confidently look for the emancipation of man himself.

Starting from the basic law of association, the Master has happily termed money *the instrument of association*, and it thus ceases to be the dead, inert thing which it has so long been supposed by the Greshams, the Smiths, the Humes, the Ricardos, the Huskissons, the Peels, the Overstones, the Mills, the assumption economists generally, and the army of so-called "statesmen," to be. Money, as the instrument of association, becomes a vitalizer, a producer, a utilizer of human labor power: a large volume of money, thus, under certain circumstances, being quite consistent with cheap production, as will be made more apparent in the sequel. Acknowledgment of the law of association as a basis, furnishes the only rational means of accounting for a host of problems touching money, which are of everyday occurrence and observation, although in direct antagonism to the theories of the philosophers.

The daily life of a civilized people, involving such countless millions of acts of association or commerce, such myriads of compositions, decompositions and recompositions of services, commodities and ideas, a medium having the qualities of universal acceptability and of almost unlimited divisibility and aggregation, is absolutely necessary to that life. In the early stages of society, and in isolated communities, there is but little societary life, and there man is dependent upon but comparatively few of his fellow-men, while in a city like London, Paris, New York, Philadelphia or Chicago there are many thousands of individuals, each of whom daily calls for the services of millions of men. Indeed, the purchaser of a copy of the *Herald*, *Tribune*, *Press* or *Ledger*, in making that purchase calls for the services of the millions of men who have, in any way, contributed to the production of one of these papers, even so remotely as by making the material of which the railroads or telegraphs have been constructed, by means of which the raw materials of the newspaper and the news have been conveyed all the way through from the miners of the coal, and the smelters of the metals, in the machinery used in its production, to the makers of the paper and the type, to the compositors, press-

men, editors, distributors, etc.. etc. From the standpoint, and through the luminous ether, of the law of association or commerce, as at once the centre, the circumference, the foundation, the all-pervading spirit of social philosophy, the study of the millions on millions of compositions, decompositions and recompositions of services, commodities and ideas involved in a pile of a single issue of a great daily newspaper, is indeed the study of and the royal road to the mastery of the best part of social philosophy itself.

#### LABOR POWER.

It cannot be too fully, too distinctly, too forcibly impressed upon the mind that it is the utilization of labor power which ameliorates the condition of mankind, creates wealth, and causes the wide and just diffusion of that wealth. Such utilization is, indeed, the one and only basis of individual well-being, and of national power and civilization. It is, in a word, the single road which leads to the emancipation of man.

The life of a civilized people thus involving countless millions of acts of association or commerce, the absolute condition on which these acts can be performed, and the labor power involved in these acts be utilized, is an abundance of the medium, *money*, with its quality of universal acceptability, and which thus acts as a "saving-fund for labor" and by facilitating "association and combination gives utility to billions of millions of minutes, that would be wasted did not a demand exist for them at the moment the power to labor had been produced."

Thus was it the law of association which, dominating the life of man, caused, in the far-off ages, the institution of money, it being an absolute necessity growing out of man's nature. It had to be; it must now be; it will ever be while man inhabits the earth; and it can find no philosophical explanation, except through the recognition of the supreme and all-controlling law of association between man and his fellow-men. On this ground the greenbacker and the silver man can take their stand and defy all adversaries. On the broad foundation rock of association, the protectionist and the greenbacker and the silver man can alone come into harmonious relations and associative coöperation.

#### ASSOCIATION AND THE POWER ARISING FROM ITS CONTROL.

Scattered, isolated men are always feeble and powerless for great undertakings, because of the absence of ability to exchange services, commodities and ideas, to associate, with their fellow-men. On the other hand, the most powerful men in the world are those who centre round the exchanges or bourses of New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam and Vienna. The great power of these men arises from the fact that while having great ability to associate among their several selves, by control of the instrument of association, money, and its greater representative, credit, they control the power of association among hundreds of millions of men, women and children throughout the world. It is even in the power of these dictators largely to arrest association among mankind, and they do it.

### HOW MAN OBTAINS CONTROL OVER NATURE.

With the high development of the power of association in advancing communities, the forces of nature are more and more harnessed into the uses of man, taking the place of human bone and muscle, and even of the bone and muscle of animals, three tons of coal representing the labor of a man for his entire life.

Thus, while the animal force expended in the conversion of raw products into finished commodities decreases in proportion to the total volume of conversion, the money cost of that conversion also decreases. At the same time raw products, including land and labor which before had no value, being now utilized, acquire value. So, by a beautiful and compensating law, land, labor and other raw products rise and finished commodities fall. The laborer thus, by virtue of the Master's law of distribution, obtains a larger proportion of a larger yield, and acquires growing freedom and independence. With these advances, man is steadily obtaining the power to call to his aid better and more efficient tools, among which none is more important than land. At first weak, with but little power of association, he is able only to cultivate the light, sandy soils and those at the heads of rivers or the dry and slightly wooded ones on the sides of the hills. Only as he is able to command the services of his fellow-men, is it that he obtains power to cope with the wet, rich and heavily timbered lands of the valleys, reeking with malaria and requiring drainage.

### THE MOVEMENTS OF MONEY.

Having considered the effects of the instrument of association on association, let us now see how association affects the movements of the instrument itself.

Money *leaves* those places where there is no diversification of employments, and where money is scarce and interest high; where land, labor and other raw materials are cheap, and where finished commodities are dear. It *goes* to those places where industries are diversified, and where money is plenty, where bank-credit is large in volume, and interest is low, where land, labor and other raw materials, being utilized, are high, and where finished commodities, through the intervention of brains, chemistry, electricity, steam and machinery, are, as well as interest, low. In a word, money travels *from* those places in which the power of association is not developed to those in which it is in the highest degree developed. Thus with the growth of the power of association, wealth, freedom, contentment, harmony and civilization are established, society assuming an ever-broadening base, with a stability which finally eliminates discontent and lawlessness.

### THE GREAT AND SUPREME LAW OF ASSOCIATION.

Hold up the law of association among men, and view it from any of its countless sides, and the more closely it is studied the more it shows itself

to be, to the world of humanity, what the law of gravitation is to the world or universe of matter. It is the philosopher's stone which transmutes, clears up the temporal mystery of man. This law dogs the outcast and the beggar, whose conditions preclude the possibility of active association ; it places the offensive weapon in the hands of the modern boycotter ; it says to the man who is tempted to go wrong, Go not, for society will cast you out ; it induces the laborer to toil, it spurs the mechanic and the artisan to become masters of their respective trades ; it causes the student to burn the midnight oil, and the doctor, the lawyer, the professor to spend years in acquiring and imparting knowledge. The business man who struggles night and day to avoid bankruptcy does so that he may retain that financial credit which enables him to swing a power of association far in excess of that which his capital would give. This law has its most beautiful manifestation in the family, with its tender, loving and self-sacrificing ties of father, mother, and children.

Men build railroads, steamships, steamboats, and hotels, and other men work them because of this law of association ; the banker organizes his bank that he may control association and profit by it ; governments impose taxes that they may call civilians, soldiers and sailors into association with themselves. An army is an armed association under officers who hurl it, regardless of life or death, against other armies, in order that another association called the state, may live and flourish, and that its citizens or subjects may associate, exchange services, commodities and ideas among their several selves. The post-office, with its machinery for the transmission of letters and printed matter and its postage stamps and money orders and the express in all its details, including C. O. D., are all outgrowths of the supreme law of association.

#### CONCLUSION.

Social Science concerning itself with the relations of man to his fellow-men and to the earth which he inhabits, and Association being the Dominating Need of Man in these relations, it follows that Association must be the Keypnote of Social Science. Therefore the touchstone for every economic problem is its relation to Association. There is and can be no other test for it ; and if it cannot pass this ordeal it must be rejected as false and pernicious.

When once the believers in the necessity for the fullest diversification of our industries, and those others who believe in a volume of money, whether of gold, silver or paper, or of all of them equal to the needs of trade and commerce, place themselves firmly on the basis of the law of association for their justification they will instantly and for all time direct the industrial and financial policy of this people.

And now, once more, we come back to the words of the Master :

*" Man, the molecule of society, is the subject of social science. In common with all other animals he requires to eat, drink and sleep, but his greatest need is that of ASSOCIATION with his fellow-men."*